The concert Season in review

Interesting on account of the performers rather than new music

MARY GARDEN, WHO WILL SING AT BOSTON OPERA NEXT SEASON. PHOTO BY MATZENE.

MISS INGA ORNER AS SIEBEL IN "FAUST" © PHOTO BY MISHKIN STUDIO

FLORENCE WICKHAM, METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE, WHO WILL SING ALAN-A-DALE IN "ROBIN HOOD."

HANS MERX, LIEDERSINGER.

M.F. CLOSSET BARITONE WITH JULES LAYOLLE'S FRENCH GRAND OPERA CO OF NEW ORLEANS.

It may be that the historian of these times in music will in the far future look back over their records and discern in them matters of grave import which escape our notice because we are much too close to them. But the contemporary annalist is bound to confess that he can find little to arouse his intellectual enthusiasm or stir his emotions. It has not been an uninteresting season, but the salient incidents have been ephemeral. There has been a plethora of excitement about personalities and a poverty of new ideas. This is nothing new, to be sure, for year by year New York increases its devotion to "artists" and diminishes its reverence for art. Caruso is the opera and Nikisch or some other dispenser of personal magnetism is the orchestra. Thus we journey continually toward the stars.

The musical season of 1911-12 began on October 20, when the Russian pianist Vladimir de Pachmann gave a recital at Carnegie Hall. On the following day Albert Spalding, an American violinist, gave a recital and with this entertainment the presentation of novelties began. The following list of important incidents in the season exclusive of the opera, which has already received separate treatment, will serve to show the nature of the winter's product:

October 21—Max Reger's sonata for violin (unaccompanied) produced by Albert Spalding.

October 31—First performance of Max Bruch's "Concertstück" in F sharp minor by Maud Powell.

November 2—Début of Josef Stransky as conductor of the Philharmonic Society. Début of Efrem Zimbalist, violinist, at the same concert.

November 9—First performance here of Max Reger's "Overture to a Comedy" by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

November 10—First performance here of Cyril Scott's violin suite called "Tallahassee."

November 12—Début of Ludwig Hess, German tenor, at a Philharmonic concert.

November 14—Début of Adriano Ariano, Italian pianist.

November 26—Nicola Laucella's symphonic poem "Consalvo," produced by the Philharmonic Society.

November 27—Rimsky-Korsakov's quintet in B flat for wind produced by the Barrére Ensemble.

November 28—Percy Goetschius's "Christmas Overture" brought out by the Volpe Orchestra.

November 30—Harold Bauer plays Brahms' first piano concerto at a Philharmonic concert.

December 8—Debut of Leonard Borwick, English pianist.

December 19—Sir Edward Elgar's second symphony produced by the Symphony Society.

December 11—Liszt's "St. Elizabeth" revived by the MacDowell Chorus.

December 13—Sir Edward Elgar's violin concerto played for the first time here by Albert Spalding with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra.

December 14—Bruckner's fifth symphony played for the first time here by the Philharmonic Society.

December 17—"Autumn" and "Spring," orchestral sketches by Leopold van der Pals, performed by the Philharmonic Society, first time here.

December 21—Liszt's "Dante" symphony, revived by the Philharmonic Society.

December 28—Weingartner's third symphony, performed for the first time here by the Philharmonic Society.

January 4—Josef Lhevinne revives Rubinstein's E flat piano concerto.

January 5—Début of Wilhem Bachaus, pianist, with the Symphony Society.

January 8—Rameau's cantata "Le Bergere Fidele," revived at a concert of old music by Arthur Whiting.

January 8—First performance here of a "sonata à trè" by Friedeman Bach, by the Elonzaley Quartet.

January 9—Début of Elena Gerhardt, lieder singer.

January 9—First perfomance of Pietro Floridia's symphony in D minor by the Volpe Orchestra.

January 17—David Stanley Smith's quartet in E minor produced by the Kneisel Quartet.

January 21—Beethoven's "Jena" symphony given by the Philharmonic Society, first time here.

January 22—Howard Brockway's "Eclouge," played by the Barrère Ensemble for the first time.

January 31—Vincent d'Indy's sonata in C major for violin and piano, produced by Kathleen Parlow and Ernesto Consolo.

February 2—First performance here of Chadwick's symphonic Suite, by the Symphony Society.

February 4—Symphonic sketches from "Im Hochland" by Fritz Stahlberg, produced by the Philharmonic Society.

February 10—Vasilenko's "Garden of Death," produced by the Russian Symphony Orchestra.

February 11—Sgambati's piano concerto played for the first time here by Ernesto Consolo at a symphony society concert. The intermezzi from "The Jewels of the Madonna," given at the same concert.

February 12—Debussy's "St. Sebastien," sung for the first time here by the MacDowell Chorus.

February 14—Début of Gerson Sirota, Cantor of Warsaw.

February 18—Giulio Setti's "Ave Maria" for chorus given at the Metropolitan Opera House.

February 27—Mendelssohn Choir of Toronto gives first concert.

February 28—Mendelssohn Choir's second concert.

March 3—Mme. Jomelli sings Saint-Saëns's "Hymn to Pallas Athene" at Symphony Society concert, first time here.

March 17—Stanford's "Irish" symphony revived by the Symphony Society.

March 18—Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra heard here for first time.

March 19—Felix Nowowiejski's oratorio "Quo Vadis" produced by the Catholic Oratorio Society.

March 26—Brahm's festival concerts begun at Carnegie Hall.

March 30—Brahm's festival concluded. The "German Requiem" sung for the sixth time in New York.

April 8—First concert of the London Symphony Orchestra under Arthur Nikisch.

April 14—Monteverde's "Orfeo," sung at the Metropolitan Opera House in concert form.

To this list must be added the concert of the London Symphony Orchestra set down for to-morrow afternoon as the concluding incident of a long and busy but not profound musical season. If any one feature of this season is certain to impress its prominence on the casual observer, it must be the plethora of orchestra concerts.

The Philharmonic Society gave forty in Manhattan and five in Brooklyn, making forty-five in the Metropolitan district. The Symphony Society gave twenty-four in Manhattan. The Boston Symphony gave ten in this city and five in Brooklyn, or fifteen in all. This gives a handsome total of eighty-four for three orchestras.

But there were also those of the Russian Symphony Society, the Volpe Orchestra, the People's Symphony Society, the Theodore Thomas Orchestra of Chicago, the Minneapolis Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra and the society of concerts of symphony music for the young. If to this list the annalist elects to add the Sunday evening concerts at the Opera House, in which orchestral music has been a feature, the sum total will be close to 200.

This is indeed too much. None can expect to have profit when such a demand is made upon the public purse. The Boston Symphony Orchestra has built up a following which insures it sufficient financial support in this city, but the other orchestras, which are resident here, have to suffer somewhat as a result.

One would judge from a recent interview with Josef Stransky, the conductor of the Philharmonic Society, that in his opinion the proper remedy for this would be for the music critic to condemn the Boston Orchestra and praise warmly everything done by the Philharmonic. Mr. Stransky has yet much to learn about these United States and still more about New York.

In this town we do not care whether a public performer comes from England, Germany or Italy or chances to live in West Ninety-seventh street. All that we ask of him is that he shall be of the best quality. We have no notion of sacrificing to our local pride that which is superior to our own product.

That is one reason why our opera is famous. It takes the best singers to be obtained from all the other opera houses in the world. The professional commentators on music would indeed be glad if it were their privilege to declare that any New York orchestra played better than any orchestra in any other city. But it is not and never has been and probably never will be the habit of the New Yorker, whether music critic or tradesman, to assert that a thing is the best simply because it belongs to New York.

It is this peculiar attitude of New York people which so greatly irritates the citizens of other cities. They are angered because they cannot incite the New Yorker to boast after their own manner. But this is a matter which need not be discussed further at this moment. The point to be made is that even if Mr. Stransky's sincere and devoted body of musicians provided the very best orchestral concerts in all the world, New York would still have too many of these entertainments.

Neither London nor Berlin endeavors to digest so many orchestral concerts as New York does. London has from six to ten concerts a day in her musical season, but most of them are small entertainments, piano or song recitals or miscellaneous concerts of a character peculiar to the British capita.. Berlin endures between 800 and 1,000 concerts in a season, but they are nearly all chamber music and song entertainments. Orchestral concerts are comparatively few. The Berlin Philharmonic, for example, conducted by Arthur Nikisch, gives only ten concerts each season.

It is a pity that this city has so many orchestras, but there seems to be no way out of the situation. The Philharmonic and Symphony societies each have their supporters, and it is well known to all persons acquainted with the inner workings of the musical world that there is no possibility of these two bodies coalescing. Even if there were the question of a conductor could not be settled. Each would stand by its own candidate.

So it seems that we shall have to be content to let things continue in the old, unpractical way. We shall have 200 orchestral concerts with audiences for less than one-half of them. The others will be maintained by the dogged persistence of people who wish to have power and dominion or who lie in prostrate adoration at the feet of some "magnetic" conductor. We shall continue, as at present, to obtain our most satsifying orchestral music from visitors and to be pointed at with scorn because we do not prefer our own players.

This brings us a second consideration. Our musical seasons are coming to focus themselves more and more on persons and less on art. We have altogether too many recitals. We have far too many interpreters of songs. We are continually worshipping performers and forgetting creators. We spend too much time thinking about Nikisch, or Stransky or Fiedler and too little thinking about the works of Beethoven, Brahms or even Richard Strauss.

When it comes to the devastated field of the song recital it is just as bad. We are invited to study the marvellous interpretations of Elena Gerhardt, Susan Metcalfe, Wüllner and even David Bispham. But still more distracting is the invasion of the opera singer. Few of them have any special qualifications for the concert platform. Most of them have none at all except a big voice and a measureless assurance.

Almost everything they have acquired on the operatic stage unfits them for the intimate reading of the lied. Their methods are those of a Doré, who paints gigantic canvases and makes his effects by striking contrasts of light and shade. They cannot at one step acquire the methods of an Albrecht Dürer or a Dirck Hals. The true lieder singer must be a master of methods corresponding to a combination of Hogarth, Leonardo da Vinci and Corot. It is hardly likely that an opera singer, who uses always brilliant colors and wide perspectives, can grasp this combination by merely exercising the will to sing lieder.

Mary Garden, Emma Calvé and several others announce that they will give concerts next season. Miss Garden is going to divide her operatic labors among four cities, Boston, Philadelphia, New York and Chicago. But she intends to find no small amount of time to warble songs. Mme. Calvé will also chant French chansons and variegate her entertainment with an act of "Carmen" in costume.

These mixed and inartistic entertainments do more to debase public taste than the casual observer can fancy. But in the end they do not accomplish a much larger measure of evil than the concentration of public thought upon the celebrity of opera singers who sing lieder very badly. Second to this is the profound interest in the personality of people who are famous as lieder singers only.

The audiences which assemble to hear these people go prepared to accept everything offered to them as the true gospel of art. It is a pity that this is the case, because the personal influence of these singers, exercised mainly through the agency of sensuously beautiful tone, is very great. They sing Schubert, Schumann, Franz and Brahms often incorrectly and frequently with a spurious emotion. The mass of listeners gives no attention to the text of the songs and listens to the voices just as they would listen to musical instruments.

If now people could be induced to think about the poetic meaning of the songs and to ask from the singer an adequate interpretation of it we should have a condition far different from that which now exists.

But it is quite unlikely that things will change. The history of musical entertainments shows us that the public of to-day is not radically different from that of yesterday or even the day before. Opera singers have always been idols and great instrumental performers have followed them closely. Composers have to be contented with third place.

So we are compelled to fall back upon the postulate that whatever the conditions surrounding the public estimate may be we surely have too many concerts. The record of entertainments which appears in the daily newspapers gives no correct idea of the number which take place. Every day in the course of the musical season there are concerts which partake of the character of social entertainments rather than that of artistic functions and these concerts are either not reported or are treated as "society events."

When these are added to the big general concerts and recitals which are discussed critically we find that New York is a close second to London. Most of the concerts criticised in the daily papers are without artistic significance or value. The critical comments are practically extorted from the press by the exigencies of custom. Nothing is ganied for art or even for the general public information by these criticisms. Their only purpose is to serve as "press notices" for the singers or performers when they go "on the road."

And this is another outcome of that general condition which exalts the performer above the thing which he performs. It is a condition which cannot be obivated, but which at any rate may be lamented.

In conclusion it may be said that the production of novelties in the season which is now almost ended was about as prolific as usual and the general level of merit was about as high as it has been of late. No masterpieces were brought to light in the winter season of 1911-12.

Some good music was introduced to our tatention and some more of respectable merit. It is quite possible that the consensus of critical opinion may have underrated some works and overrated others, but there is little reason to suspect that any radical blunders have been made.

W. J. HENDERSON.

A CONCERT BY NEGROES.

An Orchestra of Unique Kind to Play Quaint Music.

The concert of negro music to be given at Carnegie Hall on Thursday evening should be of unusual interest. The musical abilities of the negro race are well known, but few New Yorkers realize that there exists in this city an orchestra of 125 men which performs in a manner quite its own compositions of negro composers, including its own talented conductors, Messrs. James Reese Europe and William H. Tyers. The rhythmical swing of the music of sixty mandolins, twenty-five violins, fifteen cellos and a sprinkling of brass and wood wind, augmented by ten pianos, is said to be irresistible by those who have been fortunate enough to hear it. This orchestra is to play several waltzes, marches, "spirituals" and other numbers at the concert referred to, which is to be given in aid of the recently formed Music School Settlement for Colored People.

There will also be a male chorus of 150 voices which has been trained especially for this concert by Will Marion Cook. This chorus will sing Mr. Cook's arrangement of "The Rain Song" and a quaint negro melody composed by him entitled "Swing Along."

The choir of St. Philip's Church, consisting of forty men and boys, under the leadership of Paul C. Bohlen, a colored organist who had the advantage of studying at the Conservatory of Music in this city under Dvorak, will sing one of Mr. Bohlen's compositions and a cantata by Coleridge-Taylor, perhaps the most talented composer of the negro race.

FAREWELL TO NIKISCH.

Programmes of the London Symphony Orchestra Concerts.

At the Metropolitan Opera House to-night at 8:15 o'clock Mr. Nikisch and the London Symphony Orchestra, with Miss Elena Gerhardt, the noted German lieder exponent, added as a special feature in four Strauss songs and one by Herman Goetz, will reappear in a supplementary concert, the last except one in America at this time. The last of the Nikisch concerts will take place at 2:30 o'clock to-morrow afternoon at Carnegie Hall.

For to-night's concert Mr. Nikisch has provided a programme quite ample enough to suit the patron of symphonic and other music of high form. For the orchestra alone there are six numbers, whose ultimate consequence may be measured by the one fact alone that No. 3 upon the bill is no less a work than Beethoven's Symphony in C minor, No. 5. There are five Wagner numbers, the first of which is "The Rienzi" overture; prelude, "Parsifal," and Trauermarch "Gotterdämmerung," as one number; Bacchanale, "Tannhäuser" and their last, "The Meistersinger" overture. The orchestra will also accompany Miss Gerhardt in her first song, "Der Widerspaenstigen Zaemung," Herman Goetz. For her Strauss songs, "Ruhe meine Seele," "Staendchen," "Morgen" and "Wiegenlied," she will have the support of Mr. Nikisch at the piano.

For to-morrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock at Carnegie Hall Mr. Nikisch has provided a programme of four numbers. These are overture "Oberon," Von Weber; Symphony in E minor, No. 5, Tschaikowsky; symphonic poem "Don Juan," Richard Strauss; Hungarian rhapsody, No. 1; in F, Liszt.

MME. FREMSTAD IN CONCERT.

The programme of the concert at Carnegie Hall on Tuesday evening for the benefit of the German Governesses Home is as follows:

Preislied Meistersinger ..... Wagner
Mr. Frank Ormsby.
Minuet ..... Prospero-Kreisler
Adagio ..... Beethoven
Allegro (Concerto, F major) ..... Bach
Miss Marie Nichols.
Aria—"Dich theure Halle" ..... Wagner
Mme. Fremstad.
Crying of the Water ..... Tipton
Mr. Frank Ormsby.
Faust Fantasie ..... Wiemavoski
Miss Marie Nichols.
Es blinkt der Thau ..... Rubinstein
Ich hab ein kleines Lied erdacht ..... Bungert
Les Filles de Cadiz ..... Delibes
Mme. Fremstad.
Wind and Lyre ..... Harriet Ware
Mr. Frank Ormsby.
Slavonic dance ..... Dvorak
Russian song ..... Faly
Perpetuo Mobile ..... Nevcek
Miss Marie Nichols.
The Chalet Girl's Sunday ..... Ole Bull
Primula Veris ..... Grieg
A Vision ..... Grieg
Ingrid's Song ..... Kjerulf
Mme. Fremstad.

Hans Merx to Sing.

The joint recital by John Adam Hugo, composer-pianist and Hans Merx, barytone, the German lieder singer, which was postponed from Saturday, will take place on Tuesday afternoon, April 30, at 3:15 P. M. in Rumford Hall. Hans Kronold will play the accompaniments for his songs and Mildred Steele Allen for the others. Following is the revised programme:

Fahrt zum Hades ..... Schubert
Die Lotosblume ..... Schumann
Reiselied ..... Mendelssohn
Der Musikant ..... Hugo Wolf
H. Merx.
Sonata C sharp minor, op. 27 ..... Beethoven
J. A. Hugo.
Dein Angesicht ..... Le Massena
Rosenlieder ..... Fürst zu Eulenburg
Drei Wanderer ..... Hermann
H. Merx.
Kinderfurcht ..... Hugo
Etude C minor
Prelude E minor ..... Chopin
Ballade G minor
J. A. Hugo.
Meernacht
Dein ..... F. E. Toennies, from
Ewiger Mai ..... "Rosen und Cypressen" Kronold
H. Merx.
Polonaise in E ..... Liszt
J. A. Hugo

DUE TO RICHARD STRAUSS.

The Career of Grete Wiesenthal as a Dancer Here and Abroad.

It was Richard Strauss who first suggested to Grete Wiesenthal and her two sisters that they leave the ballet at the Imperial Opera House in Vienna and try alone their dancing in which they had been instructed by the dancing teachers at the ballet school of the opera house. This is one of the foremost schools of Europe, and the ballet corps of the opera house is a feature of the institution of which the Viennese are justly proud. Richard Strauss, who is an admirer of good music of all kinds, recommended these three talented girls to make a specialty of the waltzes of Johann Strauss. He is the musician most typical of Vienna and this good advice was followed.

Already had the three sisters distinguished themselves among the pupils of the ballet school and it was not difficult for them to find employment in the theatres of their native city. As "The Three Graces" they soon became famous in their own city and later travelled through the German towns. In London they danced at the Hippodrome, and their imitation of Isadora Duncan, with the additional variety that came from their knowledge of the ballet which they had acquired at the school, helped them to win immediate success. After a long engagement at the Winter Garden in Berlin they went back to Vienna, where two of the sisters married and retired from the stage. Grete also married a painter in Vienna, but she continued to dance.

It was in Berlin that Max Reinhart saw her and found in this graceful, emotional dancer the embodiment of his idea of *Sumurun*. She was then persuaded to give up her career as a dancer in order to appear in the pantomime. She was as successful in her pantomime as in her dancing, but it was not possible for her to stay more than a certain time in the company, as other contracts had been made for her. She has since danced in Vienna and other cities in Germany, always alone, since her sisters have refused all offers to return to the stage. Grete Wiesenthal has been engaged by the Shuberts to remain in this country next season and dance in the same company with Mikail Mordkin if that dancer comes back.

THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

The Philharmonic Society of New York in a prospectus just issued announces a preliminary list of soloists and the dates of concerts to be given the coming season in Carnegie Hall under Josef Stransky. Ysaye and Mischa Elman will have their first orchestral appearances of the season with the Philharmonic, while a number of other eminent artists, among them Mme. Schumann-Heink, John McCormack, Godowsky, Max Pauer and Ernest Schelling will be first heard here next winter in these concerts. Among other soloists secured are Mme. Rappold, Miss Namara Toye, Germaine Schnitzer, Maud Powell, Carl Jörn, Zimbalist, Rudolph Ganz, Henry P. Schmitt, Leo Schulz, Louis Persinger and Reinhold von Warlich.

The usual series of sixteen Thursday evening concerts will take place as follows: November 14, 21 and 28; December 12, 19 and 26; January 2, 16, 23 and 30; February 6, 13 and 27; March 6, 13 and 27. The Friday afternoon series of sixteen concerts will fall on November 15, 22 and 29; December 13, 20 and 27; January 3, 17, 24 and 31; February 7, 14 and 28; March 7, 14 and 28. There will again be given eight Sunday afternoon concerts, the dates being November 17, December 1, 22 and 29; January 5 and 26, February 2 and 9.

The Philharmonic management allows former patrons until September 15 in which to renew their Carnegie Hall subscriptions, and announces that any seats then unclaimed by them will be considered open to allotment to new subscribers.

Last Appearance of Zimbalist.

Efrem Zimbalist, the Russian violinist, will appear for the last time this season at the Hippodrome this afternoon at 2 o'clock on the occasion of the celebration of the fifteenth jubilee of the *Jewish Daily Forward*. Mr. Zimbalist will be assisted by Nahan Franko's orchestra. The programme:

Overture Merry Wives of Windsor ..... Nicolai
Orchestra, Nahan Franko Conductor.
Concerto G minor ..... Bruch
Mr. Zimbalist.
Peer Gynt Suite ..... Grieg
Orchestra, Nahan Frano Conductor.
Oriental ..... Cui
Melody and Dance ..... Zimbalis
Liebesfreud ..... Kriesler
Mr. Zimbalist.
Hungarian Rhapsodie No. 2 ..... Liszt
Orchestra, Nahan Franko Conductor.

Dream Saved Train From Wreck.

From the Atlanta Journal.

Awakening from a sleep in which he had dreamed that a nearby trestle on the Southern Railroad had been washed away O. T. Kitchens, a section foreman, although suffering from illness, arose from his bed and went to South River, six miles from here, before dawn to discover that his dream was a reality.

The foreman found that the stream, swollen by heavy rains, had carried away a trestle spanning a sixty-five foot chasm. He knew that a passenger train en route from Atlanta to Columbus, Ga., soon was to arrive at the opposite side of the river, but he had no means of reaching that point to warn the engineer of the danger, and the river is three-quarters of a mile wide.

Standing on the bank the man put his hands to his lips and repeatedly "hallooed" for half an hour. Finally he heard an answering shout and he called out a warning to J. E. Daniel, the man who had heard him. Daniel flagged the train as it neared the brink of the stream.